

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT MY
SUBJ: NEW CABINT APPOINTMENTS

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 2328

1. SUMMARY. IN A SMALL-SCALE RESHUFFLE OF HIS SUB-CABINET, PM HUSSEIN APPEARS TO BE CONSOLIDATING HIS POSITION IN UMNO AND PAS BY PROMOTING A NUMBER OF MALAYS TO NEW POSITIONS AS DEPUTY MINISTERS AND PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES. END SUMMARY.

2. PRIME MINISTER HUSSEIN ONN ANNOUNCED A NUMBER OF CABINET CHANGES APRIL 14. THE FOLLOWING PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES WERE PROMOTED TO DEPUTY MINISTERS:

SENATOR RAFIDAH AZIZ (UMNO), FINANCE (FORMERLY IN PUBLIC ENTERPRISES).

LEW SIP HON (MCA), PRIMARY INDUSTRIES.

K. PATHMANABAN (MIC), LABOR AND MANPOWER.

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MUSTAPHA ALI (PAS), SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT (FORMERLY IN TRADE AND INDUSTRY). TWO NEW DEPUTY MINISTERS WERE BROUGHT INTO THE GOVERNMENT FOR THE FIRST TIME:

ABDUL MANAN OTHMAN (UMNO), PUBLIC ENTERPRISES.

HAJI SALLEH JAFARUDDIN (SARAWAK'S PBB --
PARTY PESAKA BUMIPUTRA BERSATU), EDUCATION. (HE
WAS APPOINTED A SENATOR APRIL 14 TO ENABLE HIM
TO TAKE THE POSITION.)

TWO OTHER MP'S WERE APPOINTED PARLIAMENTARY
SECRETARIES:

HAJI EMBONG YAHAYA (UMNO), LAND AND REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT.

HAJI ABDUL WAHAB YUNOS (PAS), FINANCE.
CULTURE, YOUTH AND SPORTS PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
ABDUL JALAL BIN ABU BAKAR (UMNO) WAS SHIFTED TO
THE SAME POSITION AT DEFENSE.

3. THESE CHANGES MEAN THAT ONLY THE FOREIGN,
WELFARE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES DO NOT
HAVE DEPUTY MINISTERS. THREE NEW MINISTRIES --
PRIMARY INDUSTRIES, EDUCATION AND FINANCE --
HAVE TWO DEPUTY MINISTERS EACH. (AGRICULTURE
AND THE PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT ALREADY HAD
TWO DEPUTIES.)

4. THIS CABINET SHUFFLE IS INTERESTING IN SEVERAL
RESPECTS. MOST OF THE NEWLY PROMOTED OR APPOINTED
DEPUTY MINISTERS AND PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES
ARE MALAYS; ONLY TWO NON-MALAYS WERE INCLUDED
AMONG THE EIGHT. TWO OF THE APPOINTMENTS FILLED
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POSITIONS MADE VACANT BY THE RESIGNATION AND
SUBSEQUENT ARRESTS OF ABDULLAH AHMAD (DEPUTY
MINISTER FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND
ENVIRONMENT) AND ABDULLAH MAJID (DEPUTY
MINISTER OF LABOR AND MANPOWER). OF THE THREE
MINISTRIES GIVEN A SECOND DEPUTY MINISTER,
THE CHANGE IN PRIMARY INDUSTRIES WAS APPARENTLY
A TECHNOCAL ONE TO ALLOW LEW SIP HON TO
CONCENTRATE ON RUBBER MATTERS AND THE INCUMBENT
PAUL LEONG TO WORK ON TIN. THE OTHER TWO
CHANGES, THOUGH, ADDED MALAY DEPUTY MINISTERS
TO BALANCE CHINESE DEPUTIES IN IMPORTANT
MINISTRIES (THE INCUMBENTS IN FINANCE AND
EDUCATION WERE MCA'S RICHARD HO AND CHAN SIANG
SUN). FINALLY, OF THE THREE MINISTRIES WHICH STILL
DO NOT HAVE DEPUTIES, THE MFA HAS TRADITIONALLY NEVER
HAD ONE, WHILE THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES IN LOCAL
GOVERNMENT (LING LIONG SIK, MCA) AND WELFARE
(PATRICK ANAK UREN, SARAWAK NATIONAL PARTY) ARE

CONSPICUOUSLY NON-MALAYS.

5. COMMENT. OUR PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF THE CABINET CHANGES IS THAT PM HUSSEIN SEEKS TO BE CONSOLIDATING HIS POSITION AMONG THE MALAY PARTIES OF THE NATIONAL FRONT BY PROMOTING A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF UMNO AND PAS MEMBERS. WE WERE TOLD BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE MCA THAT THERE WERE A NUMBER OF LAST MINUTE ADDITIONS TO THE LIST OF PROMOTIONS AND WE SURMISE THAT THESE WERE MOSTLY MALAYS SINCE THE SPECULATION (REFTEL) ON THE CHANGES INDICATED A RACIALLY MORE BALANCED LIST. WE ALSO NOTE THE ABSENCE OF ANY BERJAYA MP'S ON THE PROMOTION LIST. THIS FAILURE SUGGESTS A NUMBER OF POSSIBILITIES. ONE IS THAT BERJAYA LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HAS NO ONE OF SUFFICIENT STATURE IN PARLIAMENT TO ENTER THE GOVERNMENT. ANOTHER IS THAT KUALA LUMPUR IS TRYING TO AVOID BEING FURTHER DRAWN INTO THE CONTINUING SPAT BETWEEN BERJAYA AND USNO IN SABAH EVEN THOUGH THIS MEANS BERJAYA REMAINS UNREPRESENTED IN THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. UNDERHILL

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